

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 760

CG 021 348

AUTHOR Preshaw, Gene; Steele, Larry
TITLE "Personal Growth: A Continuation High School Drug Defense."
PUB DATE Feb 88
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the California Association for Counseling and Development (San Francisco, CA, February 26-28, 1988).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Continuation Students; *Continuing Education; Drug Education; High Schools; *High School Students; *Individual Development; *Nontraditional Education; Prevention; Self Esteem

ABSTRACT

Two drug intervention courses were developed for students at risk, entitled "Personal Growth" and "Advanced Personal Growth." These courses were implemented by continuation high school staffs to raise self-esteem. Both courses emphasize building positive relationships and support systems, sharing feelings, and trusting. These are skills students from dysfunctional families tend to be without. It is recommended that two facilitators share responsibility for the class, a teacher and a counselor, and that these facilitators have additional training. The class begins with simple, low-risk activities designed to begin the bonding and trusting process. As the weeks pass and as students begin to trust and share feelings they reach deeper levels of disclosure. The classes serve as a beginning for students with a history of dysfunction. Some will quit, others will move mountains within the safety of the group but will seem to fall backward after the class is over. A few will use the class as a stepping stone to other support groups and a few will seem worse off because they cannot return to denial and are in great discomfort. However, the seeds have been planted and they will grow. (Information on how to receive the manual, "A Guidebook for Personal Growth" is included.) (ABL)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

Title: "Personal Growth: A Continuation
High School Drug Defense"

Author: Gene Preshaw, Mentor Teacher
Alessandro High School
Hemet, California 92343

Author: Larry Steele, Counselor
Alessandro High School
Hemet, California 92343

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gene Preshaw

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

"Personal Growth: A Continuation High School Drug Defense"

For students at risk, two drug intervention courses entitled "Personal Growth" and "Advanced Personal Growth" have been developed and implemented by continuation staffs to raise self-esteem.

"Personal Growth," a nine-week basic course has been used with success in both the continuation setting, and comprehensive high schools in the state of California. The advanced course is currently in use at Alessandro High School, a continuation school located in Hemet, California.

Both courses stress building positive relationships and support systems, sharing feelings and learning how to trust.

Personal Growth: A Continuation High School Drug Defense

Research indicates that positive self-esteem is essential for student's ability to lead a drug free life. Several years ago, Duane Heglie, a counselor at a small continuation school in Northern California and several colleagues, developed and implemented a nine-week self-esteem enhancement course entitled "Personal Growth." The class has been shared with several continuation schools and comprehensive schools seeking a drug intervention model for students at risk.

This course, "Personal Growth," has been offered for two years at Alessandro High School, a continuation school in Hemet, California. In addition, an advanced nine-week class, "Advanced Personal Growth," was developed by Gene Preshaw, Mentor Teacher, and Larry Steele, Counselor.

Both courses emphasize building positive relationships and support systems, sharing feelings and trusting. These are skills students from dysfunctional families tend to be without.

It is recommended that two facilitators share responsibility for the class, a teacher and a counselor, and that these facilitators have had additional training from such sources as: "Systematic Helping Skills" (Carkoff Training), Reality Therapy, Sid Simon's "Personal Growth Workshops." The facilitators should also have a breadth of knowledge about dysfunctional families, drug intervention and abuse, sexual assault and child abuse, suicide, and community support groups including Alanon, Alateen, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics, and Children of Alcoholics.

The staff of the school should be supportive of the class and will need inservicing. At Alessandro High School, other teachers and the Principal, Jim Smith, who also holds a Pupil Personnel Credential, have facilitated the class.

The class must be held in a safe environment and chairs in a circle is a must. Male to female ratio should be equal, with 15 students participating. Alessandro starts with about 22 students, but the size diminishes with time and risks.

Both classes are nine weeks, or one quarter in length. At Alessandro High School, students from the class nominate who might profit next; a list is generated, and students volunteer to "ask" other students to join the next nine-week session.

When students begin the class, they agree to the following rules: Confidentiality, no distractions, no drugs or chemicals, regular attendance, no guests without group permission, and the right to pass. To speak, students "pass the touch."

The class begins with simple, low risk activities designed to begin the bonding and trusting process. As the weeks pass, and students begin to trust and share feelings, they reach deeper levels of disclosure.

A beginning activity is "Weather Report." The purpose of this exercise is to enable students to be in touch with "here and now" feelings and to increase their level of trust by sharing feelings. Students are asked to share what they are feeling and describe their feelings in terms of a weather report. For example, "It's foggy and cold" might mean I feel confused and empty. The facilitators then process by asking questions like "What was it like to share how you are feeling at this moment?" "What did you learn about others in the group by listening to what they are experiencing?"

By the end of a nine-week session, a more advanced, high risk activity would be used. One example would be the "Hot Seat." Students sit in a U-shape with one person at the top on "the hot seat." Each student delivers to that student an acknowledgement: "I admire you for sharing about your dad's death, I know how difficult that was for you," or "I love your blue eyes, they exude warmth and love for me." The student on the hot seat has to sit squared and open and may not speak until all acknowledgements are given. Then the student shares the feelings which came up for her/him. Many such activities are utilized throughout each nine-week class.

In addition, deep relaxation is taught and creative visualizations are used to empower students. "New Games" which are non-threatening and non-competitive are played each Friday to allow students to reacquaint themselves with their magical child. A great deal of time is devoted to teaching students how to touch appropriately and how to hug. By the end of each session, students are spontaneously hugging to give support to each other.

The differences between "Personal Growth" and "Advanced Personal Growth" are the levels of intensity, increased risk-taking and self-exploration. "Advanced Personal Growth" also contains more goal-setting, active support around accomplishing those goals and exploring community support groups.

How has success been measured? At the continuation high school, informal observations and a few statistics have been gathered. At Merced Union High School, data has been evaluated with the following results: Pre and post tests in self-esteem have demonstrated that self-esteem improved. Increased attendance was also noted as was an increase in grade point averages.

At Alessandro High School (the continuation school) benefits from both classes have been observed. The entire school is aware of the class, students share how they have grown and changed. Of the students receiving recognition and awards, most have taken the self-esteem classes. Students are more accountable, they begin to take responsibility for themselves and to ask for what they need.

Students who have both classes tend to earn more credits and to improve their attendance. Classroom management has improved. Teachers ask students to support them and everyone knows what that means. There is an improved school environment. All are working together. There is more hugging and acknowledgment of each other. In most continuation schools, individualized learning is the typical methodology. "Personal Growth" provides for socialization skills to be learned in a group setting.

Our staff continues to grow and change from having been involved with facilitation of "Personal Growth." Professional growth has been accelerated: Our counselor is in a chemical dependency program as is one teacher. When they have completed the program they will be certificated Alcohol and Drug Counselors. Three teachers and the school office manager have completed training in sexual assault. A school-wide self-esteem project is also underway.

Spill overs from "Personal Growth" into other classes at the school occur regularly. During a science class, students were complaining that other students were destroying the class by being rude to the teacher and constantly taking things and being generally unsupportive. The students in "Personal Growth" decided to place themselves strategically around the room and model good classroom behavior. If that didn't work, they asked the students to stay on task. The situation was diffused. Many times, the activities from "Personal Growth" show up in other classes, particularly English classes.

Below is a short writing assignment from one such class.

A STUDENT WRITING ASSIGNMENT: SPINOFF FROM "PERSONAL GROWTH"

As my mind wandered off into the resting exercise, my tension all began to fade far from my mind. I barely made it into the elevator. Rapidly it shoots down into the basement, my age goes down with it. The steel doors slowly open. I see a bright light so I go toward it; it is the front yard where I used to play when I was young. Looking down, I see I am wearing my favorite clothes as a child; a T-shirt with a cartoon cat on it and my green shorts. My inchworm is right beside me so I decide to ride him around the yard, in the grass, around the trees, around the trailer. I am so happy, so carefree. Then my mom calls me to come in and get ready for dinner. So I get my inchworm and run past my swing set and my rocking horse to the steps of the side door and go in. The living room is full of darkness, 'cause the drapes are shut. I sit down on the floor, which covered with thick, warm carpet. Dinner won't be for a while so I watch television. "Sesame Street" is on. I decide to change the channel and my mother is on there with a mad look on her face. She looks worn out, so tired, with a lot of hatred. Her eyes are so black the gaze that glances off could kill. Just before she starts hollering, rather than hearing the words, I change the channel. Fright has taken over the body, my body. Then I change it back and Mother is on again, but this time she looks so beautiful, all made-up and ready to go out. The screen begins to glow. And softly she speaks the words. She says only three words but they mean more than anything else to me.

The screen goes blank and my visit to the past is fully accomplished. As I walk through the house, out the door, into the yard, I see everything (time) stand still. Tears fill my eyes as I leave the light and go back onto the elevator, because I know there is no living in the past like I wish I could always be; young and carefree forever.

Tina Hornback

When asked the question, "But do these classes keep students off drugs?", we respond that these students have a history of dysfunction, it is therefore a beginning. Some will quit, others will move mountains within the safety of the group but will seem to fall backward after the class is over. A few will use the class as a stepping stone to other support groups. A few will actually seem worse off for having taken the course because they realize they can never return to their denial and are in great discomfort. But be patient...the seeds have been planted, they will grow.

PERSONAL GROWTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION

In order to receive the manual, "A Guidebook for Personal Growth," the authors would like you to have been trained in the following:

Prevention/Intervention

Systematic Training Skills: Carkoff Training

Contact: William Alkire, Project Manager, Substance Abuse
Office of the Sacramento County Superintendent of
Schools, Sacramento, CA Phone: (916) 366-2180

You may then order "A Guidebook for Personal Growth" from:

Duane Heglie, Counselor

La Vista Continuation High School

5843 Almond Avenue

Orangevale, CA 95662

Phone: (916) 971-5602

The Manual for "Advanced Personal Growth" may be ordered from:

Gene Preshaw, Mentor Teacher

Larry Steele, Counselor

Hemet Unified School District

136 North Ramona

Hemet, CA 92343

Phone: (714) 652-5117

For more information on how this class works at the comprehensive high school campuses, contact: Sue Ripka, Counselor, North Campus, Merced Union High School, Phone: (209) 385-6431.

PERSONAL GROWTH
RESOURCES

Ackerman, Robert J. Children of Alcoholism: A Guidebook For Educators, Therapists, and Parents, 2nd Edition Florida: Learning Publications, Inc. 1983.

Black, Claudia, PhD, MSW. It Will Never Happen To Me! Colorado: M.A.C. Printing & Publications Division, 1982.

Black, Claudia. Repeat After Me, Colorado: M.A.C. Printing and Publications, 1985.

Canfield, Jack and Canfield, Georgia. Self-Esteem Seminars. Self-Esteem Seminars, Pacific Palisades, Inc., 1984.

Canfield, Jack and Wells, Harold C. One Hundred Ways To Enhance Self-Esteem In the Classroom. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

Denti, Louis and Feldman, Kevin. Developing Self-Esteem and Personal/Social Responsibility. Riverside County Office of Education, 1987.

Kretz, Nancy, ed. More New Games. San Francisco: The Headlands Press, Inc., 1981.

Simon, Sid. "Training Materials: Focus on a Workshop, Creative Transitions: Growing and Changing for the 80's." Sid Simon, 1986. (You can reach Mr. Simon at: Old Mountain Road, Hadley, Mass. 01035, or by phone at (413) 584-4382.

Seixas, Judith S. and Youcha, Geraldine. Children of Alcoholism: A Survivor's Manual. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.

Sobby, Robert. Lost In the Shuffle: The Co-Dependent Reality Florida: Health Communications, Inc. 1987.

Stevens, John O. Awareness: Ex0ploring Experimenting Experiencing. Utah: Real People Press, 1971.

Woititz, Janet Geringer, Ed. D. Adult Children of Alcoholics Florida: Health Communications, Inc. 1983.